THE ENTENTE CORDIALE IN LEBANON

By PRINCE FERDINAND TYAN

(TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH)



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JOSEPH VI. TYAN

Patriarch of Antioch and of all the Orient (1796–1809)

Frontispiece.

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THE QUESTION OF LEBANON

Since their participation in the war, the Turks have found no better means of showing their hostility towards the Entente Cordiale than by violating the autonomy of Lebanon.

As is well known, Mount Lebanon, being both the strategical and economical key of Syria, is a partially independent Christian State, protected from time immemorial by France, and its autonomy was guaranteed under international laws, in 1861, at the instigation of Great Britain.

Thus, by invading the Mountain of Syria, Turkey has deliberately repudiated her signature and that of her allies, and has again brought forward this old Question of Lebanon, the settlement of which must be left to the conscience of France and England, and to the honour of Europe.

The following work, matured on English soil, will show how chivalrous a race occupies the holy land of Lebanon, where Mythology, History and the Bible have left many traces of ancient traditions. It will show, specially, the place that the Maronite Nationality—whose interests are bound up with the interests of Europe—holds in the patrimony of the Nations.

Therefore, now that the Eastern Question is reopened and six thousand Maronite volunteers have offered their

lives on the battlefield in France, it is necessary to direct the attention of England to Lebanon, the gateway of India, the rampart of Egypt, and on whose shores St. George slew the dragon with his lance—England, the ally of France, the Isle of the Saints, whence Richard Cœur-de-Lion set out for the Crusades, and who has lately accredited an Ambassador at the Vatican—England, the owner of Cyprus, whose soldiers are in Mesopotamia, and who has been the protector of the Druses since 1840.

Let us remember that the Druses, who are probably of Arabian origin, are schismatical Mussulmans, founded in the eleventh century by the Calif Fatimite Hâkem. Persecuted by their former co-religionists, they took refuge first of all in Haurân, then with the Maronites, who, little by little, admitted them into the southern zone of Lebanon, in order to gain their assistance in repelling the common enemy. They number about one hundred and sixty thousand—some sixty thousand of whom live in Lebanon—and are warlike in disposition.

At this historic hour, the Author of this work, in the name of Mount Lebanon, earnestly claims the restitution of its natural frontiers and the maintenance of its political unity under the ancient federal rule of a native Maronite Emir, with the help of France and England, the two great liberators of Europe, united by the blood of the New Alliance.

F. T.

London, *Christmas*, 1915.

THE MARONITE NATIONALITY [1]

" It is the Souvenir of the past which constitutes the Nationality of a people."—De Barante.

Among the many questions of the great Oriental problem, the one which touches France most nearly and ought to meet with the greatest sympathy in traditional England, is, without doubt, the question of the Christian communities of Syria, and amongst these communities, the Maronite Nationality.

The Maronites are connected by tradition with all that is great in the Old and New Testament. Therefore, with the exception of European diplomats and a few men of letters, people of to-day are inclined to consider them solely as a religious sect, whilst some even confuse them with the administrative Confederation of Lebanon to which others have vainly tried to subordinate them or make them dependent.

The cause of this grave error is found in the ignorance of the influence exercised by religion in the East, that cradle whence all religions sprang, and where, nationality being the daughter of religion, there cannot be a religious question which is not essentially a political one. That is to say, in this common source of science and races, religion is a true *sociomorphism*, or in other words, a sociology. *It is less a form of worship than a social ideal to be realised in a community of men.*

The fact that we know so little of the Maronite

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[1] *The first French edition of this work, which was approved by the " Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques " at Paris, may be consulted in the British Museum.*—(Note by the Publisher.)

B

nationality is not surprising, because no diligent writer has so far attempted to define it in order to make it known. For if pages have been written—and very incompletely too—on the history of the Maronite nation, nobody until now has thought of writing the interesting chapter of the Maronite nationality, that harmonious structure of the organic life of the nation.

And yet, if there is a kind of fortune which ought to be prudently handled and jealously guarded for the future, is it not nationality? "All must be known to be well," said Socrates.

The Maronites have an ancient nationality which dates back to the early days of Christianity. Established before France and Spain, they were the first barrier against which the wave of Islam broke.

It is interesting then, for several reasons, to examine the psychology and the characteristics of this valiant little people who still sow the seed, cultivate the mulberry, watch the vine grow golden, and the orange trees bloom, on that soil which was the bloody cradle of the highest nobility of Europe.

Let us hasten to say that it owes its vitality to its "Essential Constitution" which has remained almost intact until our days, for a nation preserves its strength only in so far as it remains faithful to the principles by which that strength was acquired.

I

In the Orient, where nationality is bound up with religion, a special term was necessary to enable the Christian nations to designate at the same time the religious and civil chief. This term is no other than *Patriarch*, a holy title taken from the Old Testament. *Imperium sine Patriarcha non staret.* In fact, *patriarcha* comes from πατριάρχης (πατριά, race, nation—and αρχειν, to govern, reign over). It is then etymologically *the one who governs the race*—that is to say, in the fullest signification of the word, *the King of the nation.*

It could not be otherwise in a country where the people have no personality or national existence except in grouping themselves together around their pastors, where nationality consists not in the country nor in a common tongue, but only in the religious idea, which, embodied in a priestly hierarchy, takes the place of aristocracy and of social organisation. From the most ancient times the name of *king* has been a sacred title; authority is an attribute of priesthood, the sceptre is only a form of the pastoral staff, and the crown, which has become the emblem of power, was at first only a religious symbol, an external sign which accompanied prayer and sacrifice.

These truths find their most complete demonstration in the Maronites, that "model nation of the Orient," a people deeply warlike because deeply religious, whose nationality is so bound up with religion that their social organisation is "the purest theocracy which has resisted time."[1]

In fact, whoever would be a true *Maronite* must be one by nationality and by religion, for one cannot belong to the Maronite nationality without belonging to the religion of the same name, and vice versa.

Of Semitic origin, descendants of the Biblical Patriarchs whose land they occupy, the Maronites are all of noble extraction, and for this reason wear the green turban. They lived first of all scattered and solitary, then in clans under the guidance of holy anchorites (*mârs*, saints) until the Abbé Maron came and gathered them together around his first Monastery, on the borders of Oronte, in the south of Ribla—one of the most important Christian centres of Syria—and gave them common institutions (fourth century). Hence the title of *Mâr* reserved for their Patriarch whose dignity reaches its fullest height in the august person of this supreme chief of the elder brothers of all Christians.

In fact, while the Porte only recognised successively

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[1] Lamartine, *Voyage en Orient.*

the different Eastern Patriarchs as free pastors of their flocks, whose election and authority remain partly under the authority of the Sultan, the Patriarch of the Maronites alone has always had in his inaccessible mountains a sovereignty won by arms, and this because he is at the same time the religious, civil and military chief of his indomitable *nation.*

This must inevitably be so from the logic of things, for one must not forget that this ancient Patriarch is a military dictator, chosen to lead the people of Lebanon to battle against the *Monothelites.* In fact, there was no other political distinction between Lebanon and the rest of Syria until the middle of the seventh century—although the nation of the Maronites, having a common origin with Christianity, had given startling proofs of its vitality ever since the fifth century.[1]

But when the heresy of Monothelism spread to Constantinople and the Emperors who took up its defence wished to impose it by decree on all those under their jurisdiction, some rebels, coming mostly from the fervent borders of Oronte and taking refuge in Kesrouân, after having repulsed *manu militari* the Syrian Royalists or *Melkhites,* partisans of the imperial decree, formed themselves into a politically self-governing group. They took as banner a cross, their first common rallying sign, and chose as leader a monk, the successor of their first Abbé at the primitive Convent, the pious and learned John the Maronite (*Hannah-el-Maroûn*), who, consecrated Bishop of Batroûn and of Djebaïl and placed on the illustrious Throne of Antioch, founded there the line of Patriarchs or Pontiff-kings of the nation.[2]

[1] We learn, in fact, from History, that the Abbé Maron and his flock who were also his subjects took up arms against the partisans of Eutyches and of Nestorius and defended with their last drop of blood the decrees of the Councils of Ephesus and of Chalcedonia, the Emperor Severus having massacred three hundred and fifty of these heroic supporters of orthodoxy, of whom mention is made by the Roman Church in her annual martyrology dated July 31st.

[2] *See* Fauste Nairon, Théophane, Assemani, etc.

A father and organiser of genius, this holy dictator knew exceedingly well how to discipline his people by manual labour and the practice of arms. He formed a society all the more definitive and permanent because founded on an Idea—the idea of a common faith, *the faith which moves mountains* and engenders true heroism joined to that evangelical love of brotherhood in independence which gives invincible strength.

It was then to defend the religious idea that the nation established itself, and this was proclaimed to all the world by the significant choice of its chief aud its banner.[1] And it was the first representative of this idea, the brave Abbé Maron, who was the founder of the Maronite Nationality and who set the seal of his personality upon it by bequeathing to it his name.

Ever since then the Maronites have kept as a National feast the Exaltation of the Cross (September 14th). On the eve of this great and solemn Festival, when the first stars appear in the sky, great bonfires are kindled all over Lebanon, and, in the midst of acclamations and the firing of guns, young and old alike leap across the fire after the manner of the Ancients, who thought to purify themselves from every physical and moral blemish by leaping across the sacred flame.

As one can see, the first converts to Christ—the Galileans and Nazarenes—lived at first scattered, afterwards in clans, until, by hot resistance and common bloodshed, the St. Abbé Maron reveals the *Nation* (fifth century), then the sword of the Patriarch, St. John the Maronite, institutes the *Nationality*, the political form of the nation (seventh century). And however far back one seeks for their origins, one finds that Nation and Nationality have as common originator the religious Idea, that inspiring and organising influence, that " soul, motive, and life."

[1] A white cross on a champ de gueules.

II

Having evolved the essence or "substantifique moelle" which is the religious idea, it is easy to see that this same idea directs, penetrates, animates and moulds the Maronites as much individually as collectively.[1]

In fact, one sees this Idea compose and dominate the whole history of these intrepid mountaineers, who, once carried away by it, were invincible and proved themselves a race of heroes. Having the secret of formidable strength, *armed by faith within and the sword without*,[2] they drew the eyes of all the Levant and became the terror of almost all the mountains from Antioch to Jerusalem. Far from letting themselves be carried away by the craving for conquest, all the wars undertaken by them are defensive because essentially holy and Christian. Thus the interest of their civil and religious liberty made them help Heraclius against the infidel Persians. Resisting the heretical commands and attacks of the Emperors of the East, their ancient protectors, they triumphed under the arms of Constantin Pogonat and completely routed the army that Justinian II. had sent against them with the object of seizing their Patriarch and dispersing them. And when the Arabs of the Koran would have overrun Syria, the Maronites knew well how to guard their holy mountains—a sublime ark in the midst of the waves—by commencing with the Mahometans that Homeric war which was never to cease. Knowing neither peace nor truce, like the eagle which from the height of the cedars pounces on its prey, they harassed the Califs incessantly, their audacious skirmishes and frequent incursions gaining for them the glory of delaying the fall of Byzan-

[1] That is the *governing idea* of Claude Bernard applied to the social body.

[2] Le Sire de Joinville speaking of the Maronites.

tium by compelling its weakened besiegers to seek and buy peace from the Emperors (676–678).[1]

Ever since these memorable events, the Patriarchs of Lebanon have, by the sword, preserved a real independence against all those who attempted to attack their religious and political autonomy.

During the Crusades, the Maronites sacrificed about one hundred thousand men in the Christian armies; and it is to their theocratic organisation and to their jealous and warlike faith that these sons of Jacob owe the preservation to this day of their liberty in a country subject to the Turks.

In the actual Orient the Maronites number nearly five hundred thousand, distributed in nine districts or dioceses as follows:

Djebaïl and Batroûn, including Egypt and those living in other countries, under the immediate jurisdiction of the Patriarch	220,000
Beyrout, comprising the town and part of the Mountain - - - - - -	64,000
Baâlbek and part of Kesrouân - - -	43,000
Tripoli - - - - - - - -	41,000
Cyprus, comprising the island and part of Lebanon - - - - - -	35,000
Sidon - - - - - - - -	33,000
Tyre - - - - - - - -	26,000
Damascus - - - - - -	20,000
Aleppo, with Alexandretta, Mersina and Tarsus - - - - - - - -	18,000
Total - - - -	500,000

At the head of each district is an Archbishop—

[1] According to the testimony of Théophane, Cédrénus and some others, the Maronites were seconded in this undertaking by the Mardaites who, in the most probable opinion, would have been a temporary Byzantine garrison in the centre and the south of Lebanon.

defensor civitatis—that is to say a civil and religious chief. All these Archbishops have residences in Lebanon, even when their diocese is outside that land. Every big village has its Bishop.

Thus scattered in the Mountain—between Cilicia and Jerusalem, Cyprus and Damascus—the homes of the Maronites are massed in the most central valleys and the highest chains of the principal group of Mount Lebanon (from the environs of Nahr-el-Kelb, the ancient Lycus, to Tripoli in Syria), but most of all on the plateaux of Djebel-Kesrouân, that fortress of Christianity, cradle and refuge of the nation.

Lebanon, crowned with its diadem of cedars, is certainly the most celebrated and one of the richest and most magnificent mountains on the surface of the globe. It is the sublime gateway of the true Orient and the jewel of the Universe. As one approaches it, carried by that classic sea which borders the coasts of Syria, the jewel grows, and sparkles with a thousand fires, enshrined in the sapphire of the sky and water. When at last it comes into full view, every one eagerly presses forward to admire it: a dream realised, it appears majestic and radiant in a vision of beauty and enchantment. Then, while the enraptured eyes are delighted by the different tints of azure which, shaded by the diversity of distance, blend together between sea and sky, one breathes a soft and balmy air and the soul itself becomes subdued and filled with reverence before this land of ancient renown which God bequeathed to His chosen people when He divided the world among the nations; that land which the Chief of the Children of Israel saw from afar but into which he never entered; that land immortalised as the Paradise of our first forefathers—the Canaan of the Patriarchs—the cradle and tomb of the Prophets—the theatre of the greatest miracles of Jehovah—the kingdom of beauty, of ancient memories and holy doctrines—the cherished place whence comes to us the dawn and the blessed soil whereon

the Divine Master placed His feet in bringing peace to the world.

It seems that in the whole of the Scriptures there is no other place spoken of with so much praise. Moses sighs for "the famous Mountain of Lebanon"; and the Bible, finding no more appropriate criterion of beauty than Lebanon, extols without ceasing its perfumes, its flowers, its cedars, its meadows, its delicious wines, its beautiful views.

This rich land, "nourished by streams, pools and fountains, abounding in oil and honey, where the stones are of iron and the mountains of brass," has fallen to the Maronites, who, occupying the most picturesque part, are spread over a surface of about three hundred and seventy-five square miles. There, under a cloudless sky and a golden sun, everything testifies to the terrific force of the sword of God. Peaks pierce the sky at a prodigious height; crests, bolder still, rise beyond the terrestrial atmosphere and appear as though eternally on fire in the midst of the snow; while below, in the deep valleys, flow the famous happy waters of ancient and celebrated rivers. Above these rivers tower masses of rock, some of which are sharp like titanic blades of stone and others massive and round like gigantic cannon-balls.

The indefatigable activity of a race, whose only sure refuge for its religion was behind these peaks and precipices, has rendered even the rock itself fertile. It has built an amphitheatre of supporting walls formed of fragments of broken rock, and on these rustic and architectural terraces it harvests and produces silk, tobacco, wild honey, oil, wine and corn in profusion.

> "*O fortunatos nimium sua si bona norint*
> *Agricolas* . . ."

The Gospel, which is the code of Societies, repeatedly compares the kingdom to an agricultural family. A people of patriarchs, the Maronites of Lebanon live in

common an outdoor life in a country charming as a garden, supplied with agricultural implements, horses, falconrics, and amidst all the splendid scenery of primitive times. Their life has that harmony and unity which the ancient philosophers used to call happiness, and by happiness they understood the right interposition of the beautiful in the whole duration of a lifetime.

There, indeed, in a wonderful co-mingling, the two worlds, the divine and the human, seem to melt into each other and become one. Above these rocky peaks where the Spirit soars,

> "The eagle braves the fires of the eternal vault."

And, under the resplendent mantle of that sun which *is only the shadow of God*, according to the poetical expression of Michael Angelo, the gay villages are dotted about on the hills, seeming ready to slide down the steep slopes. The waters, precipitated from all parts, fall in huge and noisy masses, throwing into the wealth of heavily laden vines a liquid dust which, being constantly renewed and producing a cloud of fine prismatic rain, renders Lebanon always, according to the image of the great painter Tacitus, *inaccessible to the fierceness of the sun and faithful to its snows.* Here and there, on the crest of the hills, antique Monasteries rise up, where the monks, disciples of Maron, observe the Syriac ritual.[1]

There is not a single mosque in Lebanon itself. Further, strict limits are kept by Christian sentries: on this side is the land of the Prophet, on that side the land of Christ—no confusion, no ambiguity. On the contrary, the earth appears to open and old churches seem to spring up everywhere into which the joyful shepherd-boy enters while leading home his flock, and

[1] This rite was instituted by the Apostles and this language spoken by the Patriarchs of the Bible and by Christ Himself. *It is the national language of the Maronites.*

in the shadow of which the ehildren of the village, under the guidanee of the parish priest, learn and play in the open air around the trunk of some great oak tree.

III

To reaeh the summits whieh are shaded by the Cedars of Lebanon—those cedars which the Almighty Himself planted, *quos plantavit Altissimus*—one must eross a vast plain, populous with Maronite villages and eovered with plantations of mulberry, olive, pine and fig trees.

" These natural monuments, the most eelebrated in the Universe," are situated in an elevated and eold region (nearly 7,000 ft. high), and eonstitute the remains of that forest whose wood, some three thousand years ago, served for the building of the Temple of Jerusalem and Solomon's palace. And eaeh year on the anniversary of the Transfiguration, the Patriareh of the Maronites eomes to celebrate Mass amidst a great gathering of people, on a rough stone altar at the foot of one of these venerable trees.

In this theoeraey of the early ages, the Patriareh, who is the soul and life of the nation, is sovereignly ehosen and invested by his fellow-eountrymen with the doetrinal approval of the Pope. Being both the eornerstone and keystone of the whole soeial edifiee, his authority is supreme. The sole eleetor of the members of his Episeopaey—these *defensores civitatis* presented to him by the people—he himself invests them, being head of the Church as well as of the City. Personifying the nation, whieh is a religious and political assoeiation, in him religion and State are one, and these two powers assoeiated and blended form an alliance almost superhuman to whieh soul and body are alike subservient. The axis around which all turns, he incorporates in himself the unity of the eountry, and it follows that at all times this unity is visible in himself alone. Priesthood,

justice and the right to command are in his hands; he binds and unbinds, condemns and absolves both in the spiritual and temporal sense, and receives the oaths of obedience to the Church and to himself. Having for kingdom a territory of which all the stones are living, his authority is sacred and inviolable, a high tutelar paternity, allegiance towards which is a filial duty "by reason of conscienee and not by fear alone." The sueeessor of St. Peter at Antioch, he adds to his name that of the Prince of the Apostles, and enjoys the rank of second Bishop of the whole world of Catholicism.[1] The purple of his robe is emblematic of Christ's blood and of supreme dignity. He is surrounded by an assembly of Bishops *in partibus* who compose his court, while he accredits an Embassy at the Vatican in return for the Legateship accredited by the Popes at Mount Lebanon. A ehief in three senses of the word, religious, civil and military, he has as residence *Kannôbin* which, being hewn out of the rock, is at the same time monastery, palace and fortified castle. Pontiff and King in holy and traditional Lebanon, he holds the title of Patriarch of Antioch and of all the Orient, and is almost always descended from the most illustrious, the most distinguished, and the most ancient families of the country. And if, as Joseph de Maistre says, sovereign majesty consists in having the respect of every subject, there is no sovereign who is more venerated among his people than the Patriarch of the Maronites under the Cedars of the Mountain. He is the mysterious synthesis of that invisible power, sung of by the eelebrated philosopher, which in a society submits all wills to one will, all loves to one love. all forces to one force. His name is an august

[1] One of the first persons to whom the Pope notifies his election is the Patriarch of Lebanon, and the Pope Adrian VI., writing to the Patriarch Siméon IV., in the year 1522, addresses him thus: REVERENDO FRATRI PETRO PATRIARCHÆ SEDENTI SUPER ANTIOCHENAM SEDEM.

symbol; he embodies the country, its dreams and its greatnesses.[1]

Consequently, if, after the conquest of Syria by the Osmanlis, the sole interest of the defence of a common liberty made the Maronites ally themselves to the Druses and to the Métoualis, under the confederate régime of an Emir, the members of three nations of such different origin, religion, and manners never really mingled

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[1] *Kannôbin*—from κοινόβιον, "convent" in the supreme sense of the word—was founded, it is affirmed, by Théodose the Great. When the Emperor wished to put to the sword a certain number of the inhabitants of Antioch who had overthrown the statues of his wife, the monks of Lebanon, says John Chrysostom, descended from the mountain like angels from Heaven and appeased the anger of Théodose. In order to thank these recluses for having saved him from committing such a crime, the Emperor had the great Monastery of Kannôbin built for them.—(HELYOT, *Histoire des Ordres religieux*.) Besides being a celebrated sanctuary dedicated to the Lady, "el-Saïdé," it is a place revered for several reasons, being the birthplace of touching legends, and it is here that St. Marina took the monastic vows. It was the political and religious home of the Nation and the residence of the first Patriarch John the Maronite. Although, since the time of Joseph-Peter Heheiche (about 1830), the Maronite Patriarchs have rather deserted this fortified camp of the Nationality for the convenience and easier access of Bdimân and Bkerké, Kannôbin, the impregnable eyry of the eagle, remains the symbolic image of the Nation. A holy redoubt set in the side of Kesrouân, it stands at the foot of the Cedars in a very picturesque position overlooking Nahr-el-Khâdis and the Holy Valley of Khadischâa. The tombs of the Patriarchs who are buried there may be seen, and the blessed remains of His Holiness Joseph VI. Tyan, "one of the most illustrious sons of the Nation." There one can picture to oneself the first pastor of this people following with a vigilant eye the labours of the well-beloved flock whom he had sent to work in his vineyard, and hearing,

"Between the night which falls and the day which flees away,"

their song of worship and of thanksgiving. For, on the borders of the Valley of the holy River alone, in the midst of the rich vineyards belonging to the Monastery, one can count more than eight hundred grottoes or hermitages, generally surmounted by a Cross roughly carved in the rock and often embellished with a little rustic altar having Syriac characters on its walls, these characters being reproduced in the surrounding rock itself.

together. This means that during a military Confederation composed of three distinct groups, the Maronites—who compose three-fourths of the population of Lebanon and, alone aboriginal, are the most ancient—have given up nothing of their peculiar constitution which is *pure theocracy*, always considering the Patriarch as the soul and " head of the nation," because he alone is chief of nationality and religion.[1]

In fact the Patriarch remains in the eyes of the outside world the supreme ruler of the nation. Witness the deputations, embassies, diplomatic archives—and, amongst these latter, the bulls of the Popes and the very characteristic parchments sent by the most Christian Kings and superscribed as follows :

LETTERS OF PROTECTION
GRANTED
TO THE REVERENDISSIME PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH
AND TO THE NATION OF THE MARONITES
BY THE KING OF FRANCE LOUIS XIV.
(28*th April*, 1649.)

[1] Further, the general policy of this Confederation must be decided by the majority, as is shown by the conversion of the Druse Emirs. An example of this is the first Emir of the Mountain, the celebrated son of Mâan, who created the political unity of Lebanon by taking officially the name of *Fakhr-el-Dîn*, that is to say the *torch* or *light of the faith* (1598–1635). And in order to dispel all doubt of the sincerity of his conversion, it is sufficient to recall the fact that Fakhr-el-Dîn was, as a child, confided in the Christian district of Kesrouân to a Maronite monk who was his teacher and so formed his mind, that he has governed with the help of the great Maronite sheiks as counsellors and he had a secret understanding with the Christian Powers against the Turks, notably with France and the Pope Paul V. whom he went to visit at Rome. Besides, M. de la Croix, then the Secretary to the Embassy at Constantinople, affirms that, at the time when the *Druse* Fakhr-el-Dîn was about to be strangled by order of Mourad IV., " a cross of gold was found around his neck, and it is said that he turned to the East and made the sign of the Cross instead of the Mahometan profession of faith, which caused the Emperor to turn his head and say *make haste and strangle that swine*."—(LA TURQUIE CHRÉTIENNE.)

It was the same with the Chéhab who attained the position of

THE MARONITE NATIONALITY

and

Letters of Protection Granted to the Reverendissime Patriarch of Antioch and to the Nation of the Maronites by the Emperor and Most Christian King Louis XV.

(12*th April*, 1737.)

"We wish"—wrote the Roi-Soleil from St. Germain-en-Laye, to his Ambassador at Constantinople—"that the Reverendissime Patriarch, all the prelates, ecclesiastics, and secular Christian Maronites who inhabit Mount Lebanon should enjoy the benefits of our protection and special safeguard at all times; so that they receive no ill-treatment, but, on the contrary, they may be able to continue their practices and spiritual duties without restraint. We order the consuls and vice-consuls of the French nation, established in the ports and seaports of the Levant, and others setting up the banner of France *both now and in the future*, to assist to the utmost of their power the said Lord Patriarch and all the said Christian Maronites of Mount Lebanon and to permit to embark on any vessels, French or otherwise, the young men and all other Christian Maronites who may wish to travel in Christendom, whether it be for the purpose of study or for some other business, without taking or demanding of them anything but the passage money which they are able to give, and treating them with all possible kindness and charity."

And Louis XV. writes from his Château at Versailles that:

Emir only after their conversion to Christianity, witness the last Emir of Lebanon, Bécbir Chéhab (1788–1840), who openly declared himself and all his family converted to the Maronite faith, and built Monasteries in Lebanon and a Chapel to St. Maron adjoining his own residence at *Beith-el-Dîn*, called the *refuge of the faith*. This means that truly the question of religion is primordial in these mountains where all is faith and prayer, where the rocks are hermitages blazoned with the Cross, where the localities bear the names of Saints and Monasteries (*Mârs* and *Deirs*) and the inhabitants live within the sound of bells, where the State depends on religion, and where State and religion are so completely mingled together that it is impossible not only to have any idea of a conflict between them, but even to distinguish one from the other.

> "by the grace of God, Emperor and most Christian King of France and Navarre, following the example of his late most honoured Lord and Great-grandfather, he takes the Maronites under his protection and safeguard."

And he advises his Ambassadors and Consuls both present and future

> "to assist with their services and protection the Patriarch of Antioch and all the Christian Maronites of Mount Lebanon wherever necessary, so that they receive no ill-treatment, for such is his good pleasure."[1]

Thus the Patriarch of Lebanon accredits an Agent at Paris—*negotiorum gestor*—and the general Consulate of France in Syria has an exceptional importance and a marked pre-eminence by reason only of its high mission in the Mountain.

In home affairs the immemorial and absolute authority of the Patriarch before the Confederation remains *supreme* with the Maronites since this event. All-powerful next to the Emir from a political point of view, the patriarchal authority, palladium of the nation, shares with the Divan of the latter the administration of justice by the mediation of the Bishops. It presides over all cases relating to the marriage laws, separations (divorces), dispensations, testaments, guardianships, contracts, etc., and all questions whatsoever they may be concerning the members of the clergy. Further, it reserves for itself alone the final decision in all cases where the civil law is in conflict with the religious. That is to say there is nothing higher

[1] The French protection of the Maronites of Lebanon, solemnly affirmed during the Crusades by Louis IX. in the name of all his successors, dates back to Charlemagne, the Emperor of the Western countries, to whom the Calif Haroûn-al-Raschid, finding it impossible to subdue these champions of the Cross, sends an Embassy of honour and the Keys of the Holy Sepulchre (810). "I recognise that the Maronites are French from time immemorial," declares General Bonaparte, in 1799, to a deputation of the Patriarch Joseph VI. Tyan, under the walls of Acre.

than a patriarchal decree, the Patriarch—the sovereign Arbitrator, incarnating the religious idea—being the great regulator whose influence reaches to the smallest wheels of the national life. It follows that the clergy, the owners of more than a third of the country, add to the safeguard of consciences the defence of civil interests. Thus, they help to levy and to collect the taxes of which they keep a part, and also perform the duty of mayor, keeping the registers of the civil state and issuing official certificates in the churches, those sole "houses of the people."[1]

Thus, the general supervision of police and of the confederate executive force devolves upon the Emir, but *autonomy in internal administration and supremacy in national jurisdiction are in the hands of the Patriarch*, which means to say the power of the former remains in part submissive to the theocratic authority of the latter. And if there is dualism of impulse and a kind of equipoise of the powers in outside politics, the supremacy rests *ab antiquo* and *ab initio* with the founder and father of the Nation.

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[1] With the Maronites, the child is from the cradle a member of the Church, for his baptism certificate is at the same time his sole certificate of birth, and he only enters life officially when he enters the religion which will guide him to the tomb. Could it be otherwise where the State is a religious community, the King a pontiff, the magistrates priests, the law a holy formula, patriotism a faith, the flag a Cross? For this reason, when right and religion are one, the philosophic definition which the jurisconsults preserved till the time of Justinian remains in practice: *Jurisprudentia est rerum divinarum atque humanarum notitia.* It follows that the secular clergy and the priests can be married, as in the happy time of nascent and pure Christianity; but the marriage must have preceded their ordination, their wife must be a maiden, and it is forbidden to them to marry a second time. When people meet them in Lebanon they salute them in the name of the Father, they ask their blessing and kiss their hand. And nothing is more paternal than to hear on such an occasion the words of Scripture which are the usual salutations in this country: *El salam alei kum!* Peace be unto you! and *Allah makum!* The Lord be with you!

That is the reason that, if a Pasha has been imposed on disunited Lebanon since 1861 with the consent of the Powers, it is only to replace the old native Emir, and *to centralise the administration* in the guise of a confederative office, as the title of the officer indicates: *Moutassârref Lebnân*, administrator of Lebanon.

Such an anomaly, prepared by an ephemeral and double *Kaymakâmat*—one Maronite and one Druse (1842–1860)—would not have been possible without the religion of the pasha who, when he is not a Maronite, must be a Christian Catholic. Moreover, an administrative council (*medjliss*) is imposed on this latter with native officers and a national Christian gendarmery, implying the prohibition of introducing any body of troops into Lebanon. Finally in this so-called Turkish organisation, it is the great guardian Powers who have at the same time the initiative and the sanction, a double guarantee of the liberty of the people.[1]

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[1] In fact it was an expeditionary French body, sent to the help of the Maronites by the Government of Napoleon III. which determined the last Statute of Lebanon of June 9th, 1861. Suggested by Great Britain and approved by France, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Prussia—and, in 1868, by Italy—this Statute leaves to the Porte only the proposal of the pasha whose election is subordinate to the acceptance of the protective Powers and of the Patriarch.

And if, before 1840, a sort of small tribute was frequently granted by the Confederation of Lebanon, it was when the Emir, willing to avoid the predatory incursions of the surrounding pashas, had consented to receive from them a semblance of investiture by the Sultan.

Let us remember that, in olden times, the Patriarchs assigned occasionally a part of their executive and military power to a sort of high-constable, whom they anointed after having made him take an oath which he could not break without immediately losing office (the case of Sâlem, in the seventh century, exemplifies this loss of office). This high-constable, having nothing to judge beyond the infringements of order and police, assured the interior safety of the country, which no Mussulman or Heretic was allowed to enter, and enforced the execution of the patriarchal decrees and the episcopal judgments. It will be noticed that the emir, replaced by the pasha, has in a way assumed this *rôle* with the Maronites,

IV

A general glance at the Mountain shows us that almost all the churches are built on the top of the hills in such a manner as to dominate the dwellings grouped around, contrary to what one sees elsewhere where the fortified castles dominate the churches. It is because elsewhere Force takes precedence of thought, whereas in Lebanon it is Thought which rules matter. Thus, at the head of the Maronite Society is the *Patriarch*, the guide and supreme chief of the nation, called *mawlâna* and *saïdna*, our Lord and our Master; at the bottom the *people*, the labourer and the agriculturist (*fellahs*), who try to raise themselves by education; in the middle, the *warrior*, the confederative chief and executor of the laws (formerly the native emir, to-day the Christian pasha), and the *notables*, owners of the land (*sheiks*), resembling feudal barons, whose power is tempered by the democratic will from below and by the absolute authority from above.

An incident will illustrate and make this peculiar hierarchy quite clear:

Who does not remember the visit that the Prince de Joinville, one of the sons of the King of France, made to Syria in 1836, and the welcome which he received there! Landing at Tripoli, the Prince hastened to reach Eden to admire the famous Cedars of Lebanon. Arriving in the night, he found a great number of Maronites, both men and women, gathered together to see him, and who, mingling with the local population awaiting him with lanterns since the early evening, saluted him with their music and universally repeated cries of *Long live the Son of our King!*

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with the difference that his nomination depends no longer exclusively on the Patriarch, for he has more extensive powers from the *confederative point of view*. Thus, then, the three social elements —Authority, Minister-of-State, and People—are analysed. And, as in every society, the minister necessarily participates in the nature of ruler and in that of subject.

The Maronite sheik Boutros Karam, having come to meet the Prince, invited him to his home where a supper had been prepared. His Highness passed the night there, and the next day he was scarcely awake before he received a visit from the Bishop-Vicar and the Patriarch's Secretary who had been sent to accompany him to the famous Cedars, three or four kilometres from Eden, where the High Prelate awaited him. There, under one of those ancient Cedars, luncheon was served to the Prince, during which repast the most positive assurances of friendship and devotion were repeatedly renewed on the part of the Patriarch, in the name of the Maronite nation, and, on the part of the Prince, assurances of gratitude and sure protection. Grieved at being unable to visit the patriarchal palace, the Prince returned to Eden the same evening, accompanied by the acclamations and blessings of the people.[1]

Nationality, Authority, Society, this then is what the Patriarch represents. It is he who, having founded the community, upholds it. Priest and King, like David on Mount Zion, he incarnates, with a pathetic and majestic dignity, the spirit and the interests of the Nation, like the Cedar which symbolises Lebanon and which, turning its leaves and its fruit always towards the sky, spreads its protecting shade above the Holy Mountain and pushes its roots right into the abyss.[2]

The Cedar of Lebanon—exclaims the great Prophet Ezekiel—with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature, raises his top among the thick boughs.

The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field.

Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth.

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[1] Mgr. Murad, *La Nation Maronite et ses rapports avec la France.*

[2] The analysis is as just as the synthesis, the sacred Cedar being the image of the Nation. Thus, the sap and the hidden roots are the religion ; the trunk, visible in its majesty, is the Patriarch ; the boughs projecting from the trunk are the Bishops ; the branches on the boughs are the officiating Priests ; and lastly the harmonious leaves constantly turned towards heaven are the members of the nation. . . .

All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. . . .

* * *

Thus "the Constitution of a people is its history put into action."[1] And if the historic existence of a race lies wholly in its relation with the idea which it represents, if "a Nation is above all else a soul, a mind, a spiritual family, depending for the past ou common souvenirs, on common glory, sometimes also ou common mourning, for monrning unites hearts as much as glory,"[2] one will recognise that the Maronites are an essentially *national* people and one of the most firmly constituted that ever existed.

Drinking in with the milk

> "That humble faith of heart which an angel has hung
> Like a palm above our cradles,"

they form a holy nation, great through valour, religion and the fear of God. Incarnating in the eyes of the Universe the Spirit of Christianity, they are the only people who in crossing themselves make the sign of their nationality.

Thus on the summit of the white Mountain, illumined by the shining halo of Christ, one can picture, always near its celestial origin, a glorious battalion looking npward and grouped around the Patriarch at the foot of the Tree of the Cross.

Touching and evangelic vision! People unique and magnanimous who covered Lebanon with thy life blood for the triumph of trnth, of justice, of "the great consolation and the great light of humanity!" Thou, whose ancient inheritance consists of faith and moral

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[1] De Bonald, *Principe constitutif.*

[2] Renan, *Mélanges historiques et religieux.*

nobility which is the most compelling force of all, of definitive glory which might alone is powerless to conquer, and which results only in great actions, sublime and generous deeds, of which the gratitude and respect, and sometimes the ingratitude and forgetfulness of humanity are the result and testimony! Nation eternal and unconquerable, untouched by the blows of fortune! Holy, moral and invulnerable country, pious city of the soul whose integrity dwells imperishable in thoughts and hearts! *O Kingdom the most beautiful after Heaven itself*, whose history is an incessant martyrdom and a sacred hymn, how can one not love thee fervently and, admiring thee, fail to be convinced that—

"Man is a fallen god who remembers Heaven!"

Any one interested in the Question of Lebanon may write to the Author through the Publisher.

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